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131615Z May 05

UNCLAS ANKARA 002764

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FAA BRUSSELS FOR KURT EDWARDS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [FAIR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH AIRLINE BANNED BY NETHERLANDS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED.

1. (SBU) The Netherlands embassy confirmed press reports that on May 12 the Netherlands Transportation Ministry's civil aviation authority banned Turkish charter carrier Onur Air from operating to or from the Netherlands for a period of one month. Germany has implemented a similar decision. The Dutch embassy thought Belgium and perhaps other European countries would follow suit.

2. (SBU) The embassy official said the decision was made after a year of discussions between Dutch and Turkish civil aviation authorities about technical problems and operational violations related to Onur Air. The problems were widespread and not limited to specific aircraft. Despite these discussions (the next meeting is scheduled for May 16), the problems had become worse, culminating with a recent incident in Antalya in which an Onur jet's engine prematurely reversed thrust upon landing. (Also, during a final flight made after issuance of the Dutch letter, the landing gear on an overloaded Onur plane apparently collapsed on landing in the Netherlands.)

3. (SBU) The senior air safety official of the Turkish Directorate for Civil Aviation (DGCA) acknowledged to us separately that a number of technical problems had been detected in Onur airplanes, but said that these were not sufficient grounds for the Netherlands to cancel Onur's operations. He suggested that it would have been more appropriate to ban problematic planes (in contrast to the Dutch embassy's statement). The official was angry about what he said was lack of prior coordination by the Dutch. Saying that DGCA was ready to share its safety audits with other agencies, he alleged that the decision was made on commercial and political, rather than safety, grounds. In addition to the Netherlands and Germany, he thought Belgium and perhaps Switzerland would impose similar bans. (With 75 flights a week, Onur dominates lucrative tourism charter business between Turkey and the Netherlands.)

4. (SBU) The Dutch ban left 9,000 Dutch tourists stranded in Turkey. The embassy and Onur are now looking for ways to repatriate them. Established in 1992, Onur Air operates a limited scheduled domestic service out of Istanbul, but its main business is tourism charter flights to and from Europe. Including the 75 flights to the Netherlands, Onur operates 300 charter flights to Europe per week; German and Switzerland are the other main markets. Ten Tour, a Turkish tour operator, has been the sole shareholder since 1996. Onur Air is currently providing flight training and technical consultancy to other airline companies for Airbus A-320 and A321 airplanes. According to Onur's website, Airbus Industrie awarded Onur a "Technical Dispatch Reliability Certificate" in 1992 and an "Operational and Technical Reliability Certificate" in 1994. Onur Air was also the first Turkish airline to obtain the Joint Aviation Authority's (JAA) JAR 145 certificate for maintenance.

Aircraft	Number	Seating Capacity
A-320	2	174x2= 348
A-321	8	220x8=1760
A-300	5	316x5=1580
A300-600	4	316x4=1260
MD-88	5	172x5= 860
TOTAL	24	5808

EDELMAN